

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3168
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
USMISSION USBERLIN
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 19057

USBER ALSO FOR AMBASSADOR STOESSEL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, BQG
SUBJECT: UK COMMENTS ON GDR AIDE MEMOIRE ON
IMPROVING RELATIONS

REFS; (A) BONN 19034
(B) BERLIN 6051
(C) BERLIN 6044

1. SUMMARY AND INTRO: AT THE NOVEMBER 10 BONN GROUP
MEETING, THE BRITISH REP GAVE THE ALLIES A DETAILED
BRIEFING ON THE GDR AIDE MEMOIRE (TEXT IN REF A)
PROPOSING AN IMPROVEMENT IN UK-GDR RELATIONS. ACCORDING
TO THE UK, THE AIDE MEMOIRE LAYS HEAVY EMPHASIS ON
HIGH-LEVEL VISITS AND FORMAL AGREEMENTS, THUS ATTEMPTING
TO PUSH AHEAD WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESENTATIONAL
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ASPECTS OF UK-GDR RELATIONS WHILE GLOSSING OVER SUCH
REAL PROBLEMS AS THE DISAPPOINTINGLY SLOW EXPANSION OF
UK-GDR TRADE. IT MENTIONS NO FEWER THAN TEN PROSPECTIVE
AGREEMENTS, ALTHOUGH ONLY ONE IS ENTIRELY NEW - THAT
BEING NEGOTIATED WITH THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF
JOURNALISTS WHICH WOULD NOT, IN ANY CASE, BE AN INTER-
GOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENT. THE UK CONSIDERS THIS APPROACH

TO BE QUITE THE OPPOSITE OF THEIR OWN: TO DEVELOP
BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE GDR AT A MEASURED RATE AND
TO KEEP IN STEP WITH THE OTHER WESTERN ALLIES, WHILE
ENSURING THAT SOME TANGIBLE ADVANTAGE TO UK INTERESTS IS
SECURED IN EXCHANGE FOR EACH FORWARD STEP. BRITISH
COMMENTS ON GDR HANDLING OF THE VARIOUS ISSUES ADDRESSED
IN THE AIDE MEMOIRE FOLLOW. END SUMMARY AND INTRO.

2. REGULAR POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS. THIS IS A
PROPOSAL WHICH THE GDR HAS ALREADY PUT TO THE UK, E.G.,
BEFORE AND DURING LORD GORONWY-ROBERTS' VISIT TO EAST
BERLIN, AS WELL AS TO OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES. SUCH
CONSULTATIONS, WHETHER AT SENIOR OFFICIAL OR MINISTERIAL
LEVEL, RUN THE RISK OF BEING FAIRLY EMPTY AND PREDICT-
ABLE EXCHANGES, BUT THE UK CONSIDERS THEM TO BE NOT
ENTIRELY WITHOUT VALUE.

3. CULTURAL CONVENTION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES.
THE AIDE MEMOIRE BLATANTLY IGNORES BOTH THE EXTENT TO
WHICH THE CONVENTION HAS BEEN AGREED, LARGELY ON THE
BASIS OF A UK DRAFT, AND REPEATED REMINDERS BY THE
BRITISH THAT THE REMAINING ACTION RESTS ON THE GDR
SIDE.

4. THE SECTIONS ABOUT THE GDR'S GOOD
AND IMPROVING RECORD IN PROMOTING KNOWLEDGE OF THE UK
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IS THEIR STANDARD BELGRADE LINE. THE REFER-
ENCE TO 19 BRITISH LECTURERS IS UNCLEAR. THESE ARE
POSSIBLY INDIVIDUALS WHO CAME UNDER THEIR OWN STEAM AND
IF SO ILLUSTRATES THE POINT THAT SUCH ACADEMIC
EXCHANGES, AS IN THE LONG-ESTABLISHED LINKS BETWEEN THE
UNIVERSITIES OF LEEDS AND LEIPZIG, SHOULD BE ENABLED
TO FLOURISH WITHOUT ANY NEED FOR INTER-GOVERNMENT
AGREEMENT "ASSIGNING" AND CONTROLLING THE INDIVIDUALS
CONCERNED. IT IS RELEVANT THAT GDR CULTURAL ATTACHES
OR VISITORS CAN VISIT UK UNIVERSITIES WITHOUT HINDRANCE
WHEREAS THE NEAREST EQUIVALENT TO A UK CULTURAL ATTACHE
HAS BEEN ALLOWED ONLY ONE VISIT TO A UNIVERSITY.

5. VOLUME OF TRADE. IT IS NOT TRUE TO SAY THAT
"EXPORTS AND IMPORTS HAVE GROWN WITH EACH YEAR". THEY
DECLINED IN 1975. EVEN IF THE OBJECTIVE OF DOUBLING
TRADE BY 1980 (AGREED BY UK MINISTER FOR TRADE DELL
AND GDR TRADE MINISTER SOELLE DURING THE FORMER'S
VISIT TO BERLIN AND THE GDR) IS ACHIEVED, THE LEVEL
OF TRADE IS STILL LIKELY TO BE BELOW THAT WHICH COULD
REASONABLY BE EXPECTED OF TWO ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL
COUNTRIES. FURTHERMORE THE RANGE AND TYPE OF GOODS

TRADED ARE NOT YET SATISFACTORY.

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6. STATISTICAL AND OTHER INFORMATION: IT IS A LONG-
STANDING COMPLAINT THAT THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
THE GDR IS DEFICIENT IN QUANTITY AND QUALITY AND THAT
THIS DEFICIENCY HAS HAMPERED THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE.
A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS DEFICIENCY IS THAT UK INDUS-
TRIALISTS ARE NOT ABLE TO ASSESS THE GDR'S PROBABLE
REQUIREMENTS OR TO PLAN THEIR SALES STRATEGIES FROM
AN ADEQUATE BASIS. GDR STATISTICAL PUBLICATIONS AND
INFORMATION ON THE DIRECTIVES OF THE FIVE YEAR AND
ANNUAL PLANS ARE PROBABLY WHAT THE AUTHOR OF THE AIDE
MEMOIRE HAD IN MIND WHEN HE SPEAKS OF THE INFORMATION
PROVIDED BY THE GDR: THIS INFORMATION IS, HOWEVER,
CERTAINLY LESS THAN WHAT A DETERMINED RESEARCHER COULD
DERIVE FROM UK PUBLICATIONS. WHAT IS MEANT BY
"APPROPRIATE STEPS OF THE BRITISH SIDE" IS NOT CLEAR
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AND IS IMPUDENT IN THE LIGHT OF THE VAST AMOUNT OF INFORMATION FREELY AVAILABLE ON THE UK ECONOMY: SOME DETAILED INFORMATION IS NATURALLY THE PROPERTY OF COMPANIES WHO PREFER TO MAINTAIN ITS CONFIDENTIALITY FOR SOUND COMMERCIAL REASONS, BUT HMG ALREADY PROVIDES

EXTENSIVE STATISTICAL INFORMATION.

7. QUOTAS: THERE ARE A NUMBER OF QUOTAS IMPOSED ON THE IMPORT FROM THE GDR OF CERTAIN PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE ITEMS BUT THEY HAVE NOT PREVENTED THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE. A REFERENCE TO THE UK'S QUOTAS IS ALMOST A RITUAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE GDR AUTHORITIES IN ANY DISCUSSION OF UK/GDR TRADE BUT THE RANGE OF GOODS SO PROTECTED IS VERY SMALL (4 PERCENT OF GDR EXPORTS TO THE UK ARE SUBJECT TO QUOTA RESTRICTIONS), AND OF DECREASING SIGNIFICANCE TO AN ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL STATE LIKE THE GDR. IN ANY CASE, THE CONTROL IMPOSED BY QUOTAS IS NOWHERE NEAR AS RIGOROUS AS THAT IMPOSED BY THE GDR'S CENTRALIZED PLANNING OF TRADE (BOTH IMPORTS AND EXPORTS).

8. AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BBC AND THE GDR BROADCASTING AUTHORITIES: THE AIDE MEMOIRE REFERS TO A DRAFT AGREEMENT ON RADIO AND TELEVISION WHICH HAS BEEN SUBMITTED "TO THE BRITISH SIDE". THIS PRESUMABLY REFERS TO THE FORMAL APPROACH MADE BY THE GDR STATE BROADCASTING AUTHORITIES TO THE BBC (WHICH HAS KEPT THE FCO GENERALLY INFORMED). THE FIRST DRAFT AGREEMENTS (ONE ON RADIO AND ONE ON TELEVISION) SUBSEQUENTLY SENT TO THE BBC VIA THE GDR EMBASSY PROVED TO BE COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE TO THE BBC WHICH HAS NOW DONE A RE-DRAFT OF EACH. THESE ARE STILL BEING CONSIDERED BY

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THE PERSONS CONCERNED IN THE CORPORATION. ANY REPLY TO THE GDR WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE TO MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT DOES NOT NEGOTIATE FOR THE BBC; NOR IS IT IN A POSITION TO TELL THE BBC HOW TO CONDUCT ITS OWN NEGOTIATIONS.

9. HUMANITARIAN CASES: REGARDING HUMANITARIAN CASES, THE UK HAS SEEN NO EVIDENCE THAT THE GDR HAS ANY INTENTION OF RELAXING ITS EXIST FACILITIES EVEN DOWN TO THE LEVEL OF THEIR EASTERN EUROPEAN PARTNERS. BEFORE DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION, THE GDR PROCLAIMED THAT THE

BAN ON FOREIGN MARRIAGES, WHICH WAS ENFORCED MORE VIGOROUSLY AFTER THE BERLIN WALL WAS ERECTED, COULD BE EXPECTED TO EASE AFTER RECOGNITION. THE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED MARRIAGES CANNOT THEREFORE BE ATTRIBUTED ONLY TO THE FINAL ACT. IN ANY CASE, THE UK DOES NOT OWE THE GDR ANYTHING FOR ALLOWING SOMETHING WHICH SHOULD NOT BE A MATTER OF ANY DIFFICULTY ANYWAY, EVEN THOUGH THE UK HAS NOTED THE GESTURE THEY HAVE MADE. THE VIRTUAL BAN ON PRIVATE VISITS TO THE WEST SHOWS NO SIGN OF LIFTING.

10. COMMENT: THE BRITISH REP CONCLUDED THE BRIEFING BY COMMENTING THAT THE BRITISH HAD NO DOUBTS ABOUT THE GDR'S MOTIVES. THE AIDE MEMOIRE CONSISTED OF A COMBINATION OF "OLD GROUND, SOME MISREPRESENTATION AND SHEER IMPERTINENCE." THE UK HAD NO INTENTION OF ALLOWING THE GDR TO DICTATE THE PACE OR DIRECTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONS.
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